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writer point to the invariable precedence of the former, so that these may set up processes of differentiation.

M. MORSE

MADISON, WIS.,

September 25, 1914

### SOCIETIES AND ACADEMIES

#### BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

THE ninety-eighth regular meeting of the Botanical Society of Washington was held in the assembly hall of the Cosmos Club at 8 P.M., October 6, 1914. Forty members and two guests were present. The following scientific program was given:

Mr. P. H. Dorsett, "The Botanical Garden of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil" (with lantern).

Mr. W. F. Wight, "Andean Origin of the Cultivated Potato" (with lantern and specimens).

Both papers are to be published elsewhere.

The fourteenth annual meeting of the Botanical Society of Washington was held at 1:30 P.M., October 23, 1914, with twenty-nine members present. The customary reports were presented and approved and the following officers were elected for the ensuing year: Dr. R. H. True, president; Mr. G. N. Collins, vice-president; Professor C. E. Chambliss, recording secretary; Dr. Perley Spaulding, corresponding secretary; Mr. H. C. Gore, treasurer, and Mr. W. E. Safford, vice-president to the Washington Academy of Sciences.

The ninety-ninth regular meeting of the Botanical Society of Washington was held in the assembly hall of the Cosmos Club at 8 P.M., November 3, 1914. Forty-nine members and three guests were present. Mr. Wilson Popenoe was unanimously elected to membership. The scientific program was:

Mr. Paul Popenoe, "The Date Palm in Antiquity" (with lantern).

The speaker referred particularly to the influence of the date palm on the religion of the Semitic peoples. Prized for the food and drink it furnished, it was revered because of the mystery of sex emphasized by its monœciousness, and became identified with the primitive mother goddess of fertility. A sacred palm in a garden at Eridu, near the mouth of the Euphrates River, is thought by many investigators to be the origin of the Tree of Life of the Garden of Eden, described in Genesis. The culture of the palm was thoroughly known at a very early period, the Babylonian inscriptions giving reason to believe that it was more skilful 1900 years B.C. than it is in that region 1900 years A.D.

Mr. W. E. Safford, "The Economic Plants of Ancient Peru."

This paper was based upon collections and observations made by the writer while cruising along the Peruvian and Chilean coast, in 1887, and while acting as commissioner for the World's Columbian Exposition to Peru and Bolivia, in 1891 to 1893. Prehistoric graves were opened at Caldera, Iquique, Arica, the Rimac Valley, Ancon, Chimbote, Truxillo, and the vicinity of Payta. The material obtained is mainly in the Field Columbian Museum at Chicago and the United States National Museum. In addition to objects of ethnological interest many articles were found illustrating the ethnobotany of Ancient Peru. Not only were seeds, seed-pods, dried fruits, leaves and tubers found, but beautiful representations of many of the food plants in terra-cotta, in the form of funeral vases, were discovered in graves near the coast, especially at Chimbote and Truxillo. Among these were a number not included in Wittmack's list published in Reis & Stuebel's great work "Das Todtenfeld von Ancon." Beautiful models in terra-cotta of the tubers of *Solanum tuberosum* were found, also of the fruits of *Solanum muricatum* and *Lucuma obovata*, and most interesting of all the almond-like kernels of *Caryocar amygdaliforme* R. & P., easily distinguished by their protruding recurved embryo. Another interesting object was a terra-cotta vase representing the roots of the achira (*Canna edulis*). The collections include specimens of *Phaseolus vulgaris* and *Phaseolus lunatus*, a gourd full of peanuts (*Arachis hypogaea*) and models of the same on terra-cotta vases; mandioca roots and models of the latter; quantities of maize and models of the same on funeral vases; bags of coca leaves (*Erythroxylum Coca*), and specimens of raw cotton, dark brown, light brown and white, together with spindles with cotton yarn upon them; looms with half-woven fabrics and textiles of beautiful and intricate designs. Among the most interesting of the funeral vases were forms representing the corn god of ancient Peru, a monster with protruding tusks, surrounded by ears of maize; and the god of agriculture, represented with a stalk of maize in one hand and a stalk of mandioca in the other, with a cluster of roots at the base very much like those of a dahlia.

The paper was illustrated by numerous slides, principally of objects in the collection of the Field Columbian Museum.

PERLEY SPAULDING,  
Corresponding Secretary